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ON THE COVER
Chef Steph and Bartender Oliver from LUSH, one of the many establishments participating in Dining Out for Life for The Aliveness Project. Photo by Hubert Bonnet

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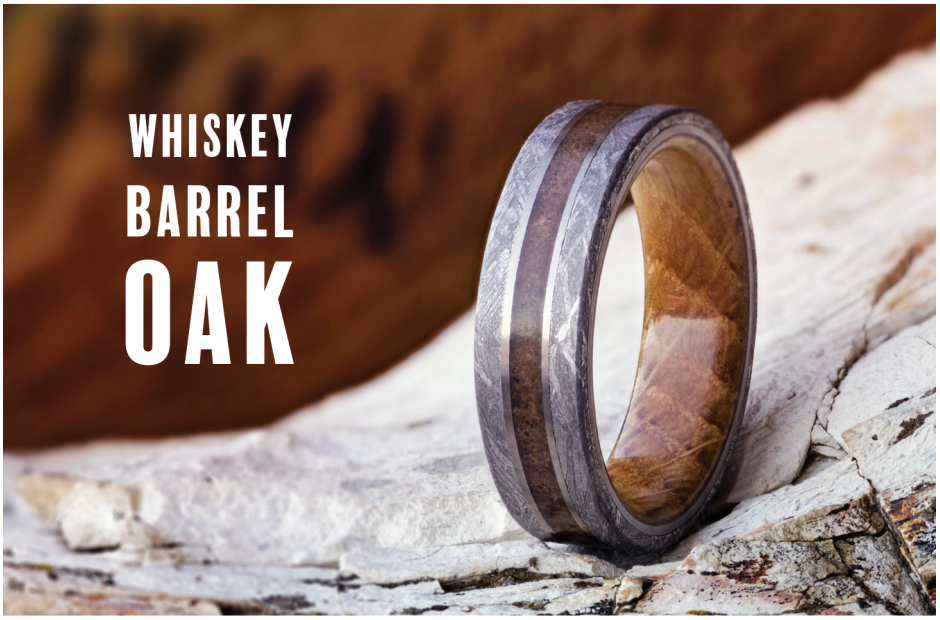

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FROM THE EDITOR | BY CHRIS TARBOX

Wine Me, Dine Me... For A Good Cause

I've always been of the mindset that in order to make a better world, we all need to do what we can to make that dream a reality. Whether it's volunteering, reaching out to those in need, or donating needed funds, we all need to chip in to make manifest a better tomorrow for everyone.

On April 26, you can help that effort with a meal. Once again, Lavender is highlighting the fine work of The Aliveness Project, a Minneapolis-based HIV/AIDS nonprofit dedicated to helping those afflicted with the disease. April 26 will mark this year's installment of The Aliveness Project's Dining Out For Life event, where dozens of Twin Cities restaurants will donate some or all of that day's profits to the nonprofit to help in the fight against AIDS.

As such, Lavender is once again featuring a Dining Out For Life guide, highlighting a number of the local establishments that will donate proceeds to the project. It's a beautiful day for a beautiful cause, so I encourage all of you to head out to these great restaurants and help make a difference.

Furthermore, our 2018 Dine & Drink issue features a handy Best New Restaurants of 2018 guide, as well as a special "Seven Breweries in Seven Days" guide crafted and lovingly researched by yours truly.

And don't forget! You have until April 30 to enter yourself for a chance to win Lavender's "Pride Cover and a Cruise" Contest! All you have to do is send us a one-minute video of yourself, telling us why you'd be the best choice to grace our June 7 Pride issue, as well as winning a cruise trip for two from Celebrity Cruises! Send your videos to editor@lavendermagazine.com, and visit our Facebook page or website for official rules! Don't miss out on a chance of a lifetime! ■

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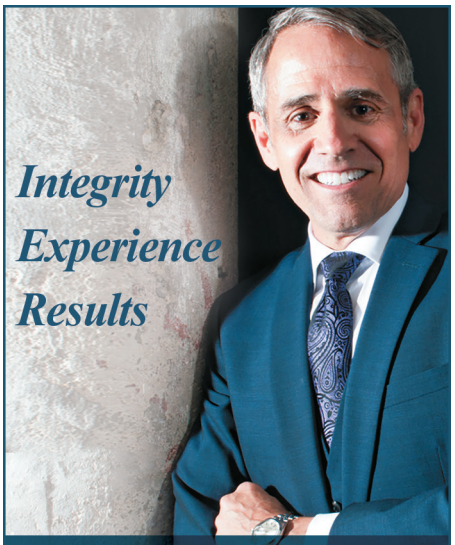

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LAVENDER LENS | PHOTOS BY SOPHIA HANTZES

LAVENDER'S FIRST THURSDAY AT MARTINPATRICK3

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A WORD IN EDGEWISE | BY E.B. BOATNER

Going Home Again. And Again.

Like wine pairings, a theater's juxtaposition of plays presented can enhance enjoyment and understanding of both works. Here, I look at what the Guthrie Theater has on stage.

Familiar (through April 14) was written by Danai Gurira. Born in Iowa of Zimbabwean parents, she moved back with them from age five to nineteen before returning to Minnesota and attending Macalester College in St. Paul. A writer and actress—*The Walking Dead, Black Panther*—her *Familiar* involves a Minnesota-Zimbabwean family just before the wedding rehearsal dinner for daughter Tendi and fiancé Chris.

Guess Who's Coming to Dinner follows (April 7-May 27). Adapted in 2014 by Todd Kriedler from William Rose's 1967 screenplay, a white daughter brings home her black fiancé to meet her parents. They have always considered themselves staunch liberals—until this evening.

Both families are affluent, well-educated people. Both actions take place in the brides' parents' upper middle-class homes, both feature food and plenty. Familiar's mother, Wonderful, bustles about heaping food on surfaces, while the other's very title contains "Dinner."

The Draytons—and the Prentices—struggle against prejudices of which they are only now becoming aware. Playwright Kiedler intentionally retained 1967. As actor Malcolm-Jamal Warner, playing Dr. Prentice, noted in a 2014 *Boston Globe* interview, "We are not in a post-racial America. It is important for young people to understand the journey and the progress that has been made. But that progress has been slow."

The film opened six months after *Loving v. Virginia* ruled miscegenation laws were unconstitutional, and was still in theaters when Martin Luther King was assassinated. It was a time of violence, just as it was in 1960s-1970s Zimbabwe, when the Chinyaramwira parents were young adults.

In Minnesota, it is winter, 2011. Bride-to-be Tendi, though Christian, is more concerned about honoring Zimbabwe customs than are her mother and father, who crowd around the TV cheering football. Suddenly, maverick aunt Anne appears, intent on performing the roora blessing ceremony with groom Chris, and brother Brad as Munyai (go-between). Roora involves heated discussions in Shona, African brooms, cattle, and cash. Out of this semi-slapstick scene, emerge revelations of deceit, decades old, threatening to tear apart the family. Chris, steadfast, proclaiming his continuing love for Tendi. Anne approves: "He is a good one!" What to do? Keep true to yourself and try to believe it is, as they say, the journey, not the destination. ■

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THE BASSETT TABLE

Through April 22
Dreamland Arts, 677 Hamline Ave. N, St. Paul
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www.dreamlandarts.org

Susanna Centlivre was the major female English playwright of her time. She ascended after Aphra Behn had held that place in the previous English Restoration generation. Born in the late 1660s, Centlivre lived until 1723 and was a core artist at the legendary Theatre Royal, Drury Lane. At Dreamland Arts you actually have the rare opportunity to see one of her plays, The Bassett Table, presented by Persistent Theatre Productions.

Director Meggie Greivell is implementing cross-gender casting and points out that the play "was wildly popular in its time in the early 1700s, but has been forgotten about over the past few centuries. Susanna Centlivre was one of the first women to make a living as a playwright. She wrote great material, but it's been mostly forgotten. *The Bassett Table* has feminist progressive themes that resonate strongly with modern audiences. Principal character Valeria (Lana Bean) is a scientist who longs to be taken seriously by her peers and to be allowed to study openly; other principal characters, Lady Reveller (Julie Ann Greif) and Mrs. Sago (Jody Bee), enjoy spending their time gambling at the Bassett Table where they can make their own money and decisions. The play is filled with such strong female characters who control their own fates."

The Bassett Table. Photo by Carl Stover

FAMILIAR

Through April 14
Guthrie Theater, 818 S Second St., Minneapolis
612-871-4342
www.guthrietheater.org

Familiar by Dania Gurira is a brilliant new comedy about family customs and secrets. At the Guthrie, director Taibi Magar has mined the complexities of a family that fled from Zimbabwe and went on to build a life in the Minneapolis suburb of Minnetonka. However, when one of the daughters is about to marry a devout white Christian American man, it triggers fascinating reactions from every family member, wherein each one reflects extremely different attitudes about their land of origin versus their lives in the U.S. Those who assume there would be general agreement on cultural issues among them will be challenged.

The white groom and his brother also bring their own vulnerabilities to the volatility. That volatility factor reaches its peak in a burst of sexual aggression that happens toward the play's end between Tendi, the bride (Sha Cage in one of her best performances to date) and the groom, Chris (a perfect Quinn Franzen). This scene brought roars of laughter from the audience when I attended.

The distinct individual issues that every character is thrown into has been ingeniously rendered by Gurira and every individual member of Magar's effervescent cast. However, the production's towering performance is by Perri Gaffney. She plays the role of Marvelous (yes, that's the characters name), the complicated and admirable mother of the bride and matriarch of the household. Those complications are held beneath the surface at the beginning and are masterfully revealed as the action progresses. Family volatility is rarely portrayed with such illumination.

THE IMAGINARY INVALID

April 14-28
Gremlin Theatre, 550 Vandalia St., St. Paul
800-838-3006
www.combustiblecompany.org

Over three centuries ago, Moliere wrote a quintessential comedy on hypochondria, *The Imaginary Invalid*. He is generally regarded as the principal playwright of French cultural history. It is yet another excellent choice for a theater troupe that creates engaging interpretations of both classics and contemporary work—the Combustible Company.

Erik Hoover plays the leading role, which the title describes. He shares, "Argan's an addict. The source of his addiction is a fear of death that stems from traumatic loss and healthcare is the only way he can cope. Like all addictions, it poisons every one of his relationships and the people around him. Fortunately, although he's blind to see it, he's mostly surrounded by people who love him, so the play is something of an intervention, albeit a ridiculous one."

Hoover adds that "one of the great things about Oded Gross's adaptation is that we get an explanation for Argan's hypochondria. He's much more human in this adaptation than any other I've read, and playing a character with unintended emotional and tonal contrast is an exciting challenge."

The Imaginary Invalid. Graphic by Whittney Streeter

Pink Unicorn. Photo by Lauren B Photography

PINK UNICORN

Through April 22
Illusion Theater, 528 Hennepin Ave., Minneapolis
612-339-4944
www.illusiontheater.org

Last year, Kate Guentzel delivered a heartfelt reading of the solo play about a mother of a teenage girl who comes out as genderqueer, titled *Pink Unicorn*. She now plays the role in a full production at Illusion Theater. Playwright Elise Forier Edie was spurred to write the work after seeing gay people excluded and ostracized from a local Texas high school and church. She wrote, as she puts it, "in an effort to deal with my anger and fear around these incidents. And what could I do about it? How could I change it? How could I make a difference?" *Pink Unicorn* is in keeping with Illusion's commitment to queer-oriented work.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 14

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Pink Floyd. Photo courtesy of Classic Albums Live

THE SKRIKER

Through April 22
Crane Theater, 2303 Kennedy St. NE #120, Minneapolis
800-838-3006
www.fortunesfooltheatre.org

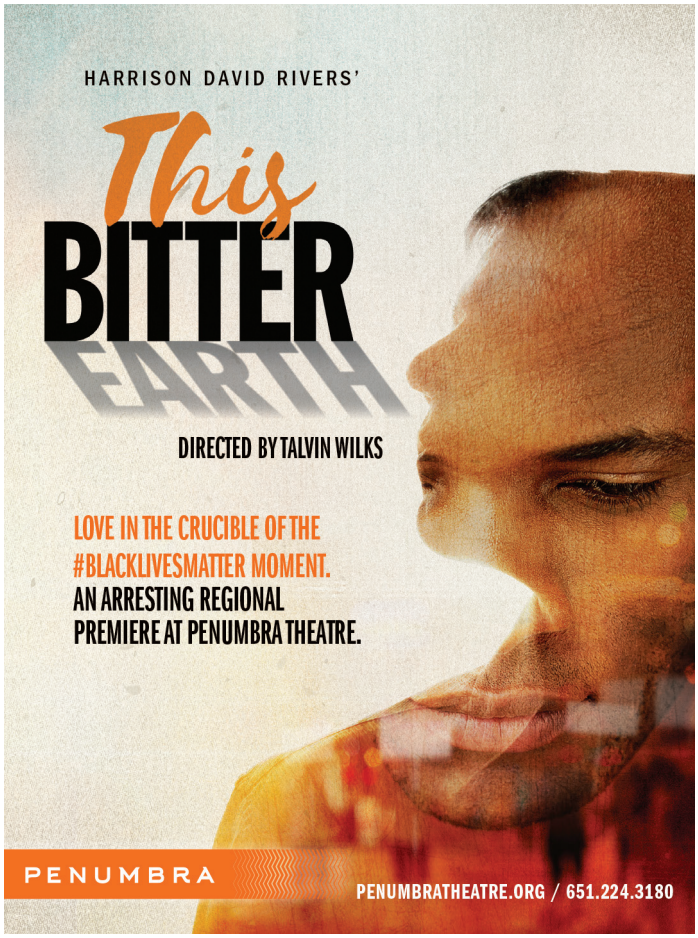
Question: What is a Skriker? Answer: A malevolent fairy shapeshifter from the underworld. *The Skriker*, Caryl Churchill's mystical 1994 play cautions that what lies beneath human consciousness and the collective unconscious, when aggressively shut out, could make its way back up from the depths and rear its head with ferocity.

Ariel Leaf plays the title role and relates, "The challenge in playing the Skriker is knowing that she represents many things—postpartum depression, Mother Earth, an ancient fairy—but *you* have to decide who she thinks she is. You can't play representation or metaphor, you have to play her. And you *have* to love her, you have to advocate for your role."

Leaf continues, "In doing so there was one word I found in all of the possible variations: neglect. She is a beloved thing, now left to die. Like a pet cat someone threw out on the street that has gone feral. No longer cared for, she has turned to luring people in to devour, but it is difficult and does not satisfy her the way offerings used to. She has become a shadow of her former glory, she is weak and lacks some of the power she once had, but she finds Josie who is also weak, mentally and physically, from having just murdered her infant, which makes her an easier target."

Director Ben Layne points out that the play is response to government pulling "the social safety net out from under people like Lily (Hayley Sisler) and Josie (Gabrielle Dominique), as they navigate the fringes of society with no support." He elaborates, "As the Skriker has been damaged by our neglect, much in the way we might say we have damaged Mother Earth, so she now lashes out at us." ■

The Skriker. Photo by Leah Edlman Bier, retouching by Phen Grant



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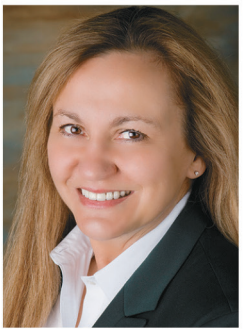

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Roll Out the Rainbow Carpet

GLBT films bring pride to the annual Minneapolis-St. Paul International Film Festival.

The Minneapolis-St. Paul International Film Festival (MSPIFF) is returning to celebrate 37 years of talented international filmmakers. MSPIFF has something for everyone, and this year it is highlighting the GLBT community. "MSPIFF is the culmination of everything we do at the Film Society—a grand celebration of independent cinema from around the globe including what's in our own backyard. You won't find a more eclectic mix of movies anywhere in the region—truly something for everyone," says MSPIFF Programmer Kathie Smith.

Smith has been programming for MSPIFF for five years, and as a member of the GLBT community herself, Smith is excited to showcase the community in a series of four films, *TransMilitary, Mr. Gay Syria, The Cakemaker,* and *A Moment in the Reeds.*

Not in My Lifetime. Photo courtesy of Pam Colby

"Being queer myself, it's always been very important to me to select and advocate for films that reflect the world around us…and without LGBTQ content, that would not be an accurate picture. And I know my fellow programmers feel the same way," she says. "These films show up in a multitude of forms and genres, but many of the LGBTQ films in the festival this year are simultaneously portraits of broader narratives: being a Syrian refugee in Turkey (*Mr. Gay Syria*) and likewise in Finland (*A Moment in the Reeds*), and the U.S. political climate (*Not in My Lifetime and TransMilitary*). These are all cornerstones to MSPIFF."

TransMilitary, directed by Gabe Silverman and Fiona Dawson, is a documentary about the 15,500 transgender people who have served in the United States military and the ways in which they are required to conceal their gender identities because of military policies banning their service. Chronicling the lives of four troops, *TransMilitary* tells the story of the brave Americans who go on the line to fight for their country—and their own freedom to express themselves.

TransMilitary. Photo courtesy of TransMilitary

According to Jamie Coughlin, Executive Producer and Co-Founder of SideXSide Studios, where *TransMilitary* was produced, she's hopeful that the film will help people realize the simple truth about the trans community: they're people, too. "According to a recent GLAAD study, only 16 percent of Americans have knowingly met someone who is transgender. My hope is that the other 84 percent of the

CONTINUED ON PAGE 18

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population can watch this film and understand that transgender people are just people," she says.

Already successful in other parts of the country, Coughlin says she anticipates *TransMilitary* to be a hit at MSPIFF this year. " *TransMilitary* premiered at SXSW in Austin, TX last month, where it won the Audience Award in the documentary competition. We think this demonstrates that this film is for everyone, whether your LGBTQ, an ally or just curious about who these people serving our country really are, away from the recent headlines," she says.

Mr. Gay Syria, directed by Ayse Toprak, is another documentary about Husein, a barber in Istanbul who is struggling to find a balance between his conservative family and his gay identity, Husein meets Mahmoud, the founder of Syria's LGBTI movement and a refugee of Berlin, when they both decide to participate in an international beauty contest to escape their muddled lives.

The Cakemaker, directed by Ofir Raul Graizer, is a narrative film that follows Thomas, a young German baker who is having an affair with an Israeli married man, Oren. After a car accident kills Oren, Thomas travels to Jerusalem to look for answers regarding his death. Thomas takes on a secret identity and infiltrates the life of Anat, Oren's wife. Thomas starts to work at Anat's cafe in Jerusalem baking German cakes and cookies. His success at her cafe makes Thomas a monumental part of her life, leaving Thomas more involved than he had anticipated. What will Thomas do to protect the real reason why he has traveled to Jerusalem?

A Moment in the Reeds, directed by Mikko Makela, tells the story of Leevi, a university student in Paris who returns home to Finland for the summer to help his estranged father renovate the family lake house so it can be sold. Not long into the summer, Leevi finds love with Tareq, an asylum seeker from Syria who is helping renovate the lake house. *A Moment in the Reeds* is one of the first queer films made in Finland. With a focus on both immigrants and emigrants, this film highlights sexual and ethnic minorities in a story about the search for freedom, acceptance, and a place to call home.

In addition to these films, the documentary *Not in My Lifetime* will be premiering during MSPIFF. Directed by Pam Colby, a lesbian from the Twin Cities, this film focuses on same-sex marriage and the challenges that the community has had to overcome to see the progress they've achieved today. "When marriage equality legislation passed, many friends of my generation stated that they didn't believe that it would happen in their lifetime. I wanted to reflect on how far we have come while honoring and remembering more difficult times," she says.

Colby says she is hopeful that her documentary will contribute to the festival in the same way as the other four GLBT feature films with a message that will leave everyone full of pride. "Marriage equality was a long time in the making, small steps that led to bigger movements. There is no correct way to have a relationship, marriage or not, we all must have the right to choose to marry, but it is not a requirement," she says. ■

The Minneapolis-St. Paul International Film Festival will be April 12-28 at various locations. For more information, go to www.mspfilm.org/festivals/mspiff.

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A DAY in the Life

BY CHRIS TARBOX

SARAH AUNE

Name: Sarah Aune

Age: 33

Where did you grow up? Plymouth, MN.

Where do you live? South Minneapolis.

Who do you live with? My lady friend, Cady; our dog, Kiki; and cat, Adelle.

What is your occupation? Service operations manager for Come, Sit, Stay dog walking company.

When did you come out? To my parents and a couple friends at 15, pretty much to the rest of the world by 18.

How'd that go? At first it was a combination of terrifying, lonely, frustrating, and exciting, with a side of relief. One of most painful and difficult challenges I faced was learning how to process and let go of the misinformed, anti-gay, ignorant, repressive messages I was receiving from the church and greater religious community I grew up around. Later, when going to college, living as openly queer was very empowering and it slowly became a bit easier to live an authentic life without fear of judgment.

When do you wake up? 6-6:30 a.m. weekdays, between 6-9 a.m. on weekends.

Phone alarm or old school alarm? Phone alarm.

What's the first thing you do in the morning? Drink coffee and snug the puppy and kitty.

Breakfast? Fried egg, kale, tomatoes, toast, and bacon if I'm lucky. A donut if I'm EXTRA lucky.

Coffee? Definitely. Usually brewed Dunkin or espresso drink. Cold press in summer!

Cream or no? Coconut creamer.

How do you spend your commute? I drive up to 30-some miles a day for my job, and am typically listening to a podcast or singing to music, and trying to tap into my inner peace while driving around the city.

If your job were like a yearbook, what would you be voted? Dog-whispering class clown.

What inspires you? Lovely music and works of creative art, nature, the wisdom and perseverance of humans who have endured struggles and dare to live authentically.

Do you eat your lunch while working or take a break? In the car on the go or in front of a computer on most busy days, sometimes I take a break if there's time.

Is your work space tidy or a hot mess? A little bit of both at times.

What's been your favorite job? Being a dog walker/manager for dog walking company.

Who are your heroes? Amy Sedaris, my parents, my dog Kiki, Maria Bamford.

Favorite weeknight meal: Go out, take out, or cook in? Cook in: dumpling miso soup or pasta with wine and salad.

Most embarrassing moment: Wetting my pants on the gym floor at the YMCA as a very small kid.

On a usual weeknight, you are doing what? Some nights I'd likely be cooking dinner or going out with pals for a beer, jogging my dog, being squirrely with the lady friend at home, dancing to loud music and playing with the cat and puppy, or Netflixing. Other nights I'd be volunteering in the kitchen at Open Arms of Minnesota or at a mandolin lesson at the Homestead Pickin' Parlor.

Bedtime: Anytime between 10 p.m.-12:30 a.m.

Favorite weekend activity: Dog play dates and soul/vinyl dance party nights.

What are you most proud of and why? I'm most proud of the work I've done in the way of self-acceptance, personal growth, and maintaining friendships and relationships that make up a community of good-hearted, fun, intelligent, and incredibly genuine folks. This makes life for me.

Words of wisdom to share: I am learning that keeping a curious attitude about everything helps in having more contentment, hope, and enjoyment in life. ■

Photo by Chris Tarbox

the Aliveness project

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DINING OUT FOR LIFE 2018

BY BRADLEY TRAYNOR

There aren't many pleasures sweeter than heading out for a lovely meal and drink with those you love. But even sweeter than that is dining out for a worthy cause. An annual fundraising event, Dining Out For Life raises money to support HIV/AIDS service groups and organizations. This year, the event will take place on Thursday, April 26, with all participating restaurants donating 20 to 100 percent of that day's profits to The Aliveness Project. Want to help out? Just visit one of these amazing establishments on April 26 and make a difference! For a full list of participating restaurants, go to www.diningoutforlife.com/minneapolis.

Bartender Oliver Sharp, left, and Chef Stephanie Hedrick, right, work at the Minneapolis bar and restaurant LUSH, which is participating in this year's Dining Out For Life event. Photo by Hubert Bonnet

Hola Arepa
35%

If you've never had an arepa, you're in luck. There's no better place to explore the culinary magic of these flavor-packed Venezuelan parcels of plenty in the Twin Cities than Hola Arepa. The handmade dough and fillings are prepared fresh daily and will literally take you on a tasty tour of Latin America in just a few bites. Add an order of yuca fries and arepitas (fried arepa balls filled with jalapenos and goat cheese) and I guarantee you'll become a regular.

3501 Nicollet Ave.
Minneapolis
www.holaarepa.com

LUSH Food Bar
100%

Ever a great spot to grab a drink and unwind with friends in Northeast, LUSH Food Bar offers traditional, comfy bar eats and, of course, cocktails for days. Grab a burger or a fried chicken sandwich with an order of cheese curds and deep fried pickles and you're golden. Stop by for a quick Happy Hour or extend that Happy Hour right into a full-on night out on the town.

990 Central Ave. NE
Minneapolis
www.lushmpls.com

Borough
20%

Borough consistently earns top marks as one of the best restaurants in the Twin Cities. And for good reason. Whether lunch, brunch, dinner or happy hour, Borough delivers delicious across a range of flavors. The lamb meatballs kissed with harissa and truffle-dusted beef tartare are particular standouts. And if you're craving one of the best burgers on the planet, pop downstairs to Parlour Bar. This beloved two-pattied, cheese-smothered burger in the basement will quite literally change your life.

730 N Washington Ave.
Minneapolis
www.boroughmpls.com

ChinDian Cafe
35%

Some nights you feel like Chinese food, other nights Indian. You may not realize it yet, but from now on you're about to crave both. At the same time. Enter ChinDian Cafe. My outlook on takeout life was changed after my first few bites of Madras Chicken and veggie samosas. Is it Chinese food? Is it Indian? It's both. And the only thing you'll care about is how to get more into your mouth. Head Northeast for a truly unique experience.

1500 E Hennepin Ave.
Minneapolis
www.chindiancafe.com

Jakeeno's Pizza & Pasta
35%

There's a special place in my heart for neighborhood pizza joints. Where else can you get a simple yet satisfying slice or five and chew the fat with a few friends after a long day at the office? Jakeeno's Pizza & Pasta is a classic Powderhorn pizza parlour with everything deliciously old school you'd expect. If the weather's nice, order up some wings on the patio and relax. Get a large cheeseburger pie with an order of wings, maybe a salad and an order of artichoke dip and your night is pretty well-made.

3555 Chicago Ave.
Minneapolis
www.jakeenos.com

L'Etoile Du Nord Cafe
100%

There's a little bit of Belgium smack dab in the heart of the St. Croix river valley worthy of a road trip. L'Etoile Du Nord is a scratch-made, "Belgian-powered" cafe in picturesque Bayport. In addition to a great cup of home-roasted coffee, the waffles and hearth-fired pizzas will feed your soul as much as your stomach. Bonus for beer lovers, their handpicked Belgian ales pair perfectly with the hearty fare on offer.

320 5th Ave.
Bayport
www.letoiledunordcafe.com

Pizza Luce
35%

If pizza were music, Pizza Luce would be punk rock…in your mouth. Innovative, expressive and totally tasty, Pizza Luce's menu puts most to shame with its mouth-watering menu of original eats. And don't forget an order of wings or, if you're in a sammy mood, the Muffuletta tops my list of all-time favorites.

Located in Minneapolis, Duluth, Hopkins, Richfield, Roseville, and St. Paul
www.pizzaluce.com

Monello
20%

Fresh, vibrant, yet rustic and comforting, Monello's charm is in its simple abundance. The menu reflects a region of Italy you'll long one day to visit. The coastal cuisine of Campania is full of succulent seafood and delicate handmade pastas brimming with technicolor flavors.

1115 2nd Ave. S
Minneapolis
www.monellompls.com

Foxy Falafel
25-30%

Falafel is one of those foods I could surely eat every day. Those crispy little balls of spicy chickpea wonder are deeply satisfying. Add some creamy homemade hummus, pita and fresh veggies, and you've got one of the best meals around. Extra hungry? Don't miss the chicken shawarma and beef kofta, both made with local organic and grass-fed meats.

791 Raymond Ave.
St. Paul
www.foxyfalafel.com

Bambu
35%

Head no further than Maplewood to explore the diverse cuisines of China, Japan, Vietnam, and Thailand. Bambu's menu is as vast as the cultures its food represents. Spicy pho, Japanese-inspired rolls and stir-fries abound. American favorites aren't too far behind with traditional Chinese American classics like egg foo young and chow mein.

1715 Beam Ave.
Maplewood
www.bambuonline.com ■

Lavender's Best New Restaurants

BY JOY SUMMERS

This past year has given us fewer new restaurants, but those that have opened have been a tasty selection. In the Twin Cities, we're eating more casually with French and Southeast Asian flare. The wine lists are filled with funky selections from small vineyards that keep the prices affordable. Menus ply us with bold and sultry, mellow flavors in equal measure. These are the new favorites sure to become beloved restaurant standbys for years to come.

You can find a variety of delectable dishes at Bardo, one of the Best New Restaurants of the past year. Photo by Hubert Bonnet

Grand Cafe

Jamie Malone's restaurant is both a breath of fresh air on the national dining scene and a relaxed neighborhood bistro. It's easy to dine here several times a week with beguiling details in the blush-accented decor and dishes like the ethereal pike quenelle.
3804 Grand Ave. S
Minneapolis
www.grandcafemn.com

Martina

Chef and owner Daniel del Prado reached into his past and created a menu filled with dishes close to his heart: fresh pastas, plenty of perfectly prepared seafood, and empanadas. The menu is Italian and Argentinian with a little American touch. Don't miss the boundary-defying cocktails from Marco Zappia.
4312 Upton Ave. S
Minneapolis
www.martinarestaurant.com

Bar Brigade

Matty O'Reilly and JD Fratzke have created a neighborhood hotspot in a sleepy little part of Highland Park. Half the little restaurant is always saved for walk-ins, meaning the bar is usually filled with locals. The brief menu consists of French-influenced comfort food with the soulful sort of cooking expected of Fratzke. The wine list is fun to peruse at purse-friendly prices, and there are several ultimately refreshing cocktails.
470 Cleveland Ave. S
St. Paul
www.barbrigade.com

Bardo

This Northeast restaurant from chef/owner Remy Pettus is stunning, with a million art deco details to examine before even cracking a menu. There's the huge chandelier and the mural of the Hennepin bridge, but don't get so distracted that you don't order piles of food. The menu changes with the locally sourced ingredients availability, but a wise order includes a salad, small order of pasta, and an entree with cocktails or a dazzling glass of wine.
222 E Hennepin Ave.
Minneapolis
www.bardompls.com

Hai Hai

This restaurant is a flavor vacation through Southeast Asia from Christina Nguyen and Birk Grudem. I plan to move into a patio seat this summer and never leave. Powerful punches of fresh herbs, fish sauce, and spice result in revelatory flavors arriving in a myriad of dishes, all priced at astoundingly affordable prices.
2121 University Ave. NE
Minneapolis
www.haihaimpls.com

Tenant

This restaurant is the playground of the chef/owners Grisha Hammes and Cameron Cecchini. From the serving vessels (or plates—I guess normal people just say "plates") to the way the food is served, this revolving tasting menu is just downright fun. It's also one of the most affordable chef's menu experiences in the Twin Cities at $50.

4300 Bryant Ave.
Minneapolis
www.tenantmpls.com

Salty Tart Cafe

Michelle Gayer's first full cafe is gorgeous. It's the sort of place you want to curl up with a perfect cappuccino and carb load on croissants, tartines, and basically anything that comes out of this little kitchen. It's only open until 4 p.m., but the bright, airy spot is worth getting up early for.

289 5th St. E
St. Paul
www.saltytart.com

Kaiseki Furukawa

While the current dining trend seems to be going for a much more casual experience, this restaurant is a capital-E Experience. It's almost like getting to participate in a delicious art exhibit. Minneapolis's only kaiseki restaurant is a meditative study in fine dining.

33 N 1st Ave.
Minneapolis
www.kaisekifurukawa.com

Octo Fishbar

Tim McKee has long been synonymous with fine dining, but his new restaurant with chef de cuisine Shane Oporto is completely appropriate to eat in well-worn jeans and a t-shirt. A starter of sunnies tastes like a memory of childhood summers at the cabin, and the pozole verde will linger in your future food dreams.

289 5th St. E
St. Paul
www.octostp.com

Bellecour

We're sneaking this one in under the wire, because, technically, Gavin Kaysen's French bistro in Wayzata has been open just over a year, but there is no way to talk about food in the past year without mentioning this beauty, as well as the service and experience behind this elegantly comfortable destination. From the breathtakingly buttery breakfast pastries to the towers of seafood to the flawless attention to detail, it's a jewel in local dining.

739 Lake St. E
Wayzata
www.bellecourrestaurant.com ■

Seven Breweries In Seven Days

BY CHRIS TARBOX

When it comes to ice-cold libations, I generally tend to be a man of moderation, saving those frosty pints of fermented joy for special occasions and outings with my social circle. So when the time comes for going out for a brew, I take care to keep an eye out for those Twin Cities breweries with a certain je nas sais quoi, mixing malted hop goodness with a delightful ambiance, distinct personality, and loads of fun perks that don't just include the drinks. So here is a week's worth of local breweries that'll wet your whistle in no time flat.

Every Sunday, HeadFlyer Brewing offers "What Up, G?!" Bingo for free.
Photo by Mike Hnida

SUNDAY

HeadFlyer Brewing

Sunday's best known as the day of rest, so what better way to chill out than an afternoon of beer and Bingo? In Northeast Minneapolis, enjoy a day of leisure at HeadFlyer Brewing, an easygoing and spacious establishment set to celebrate its first anniversary this month. Boasting a large projector for game day and a handsome patio area facing East Hennepin Avenue, HeadFlyer offers free "What Up, G?!" Bingo every Sunday afternoon, featuring clever twists on Bingo that you never saw at your church's fish-fry get-togethers. Prizes include free beer, growlers, and HeadFlyer merch. The dog-friendly brewery is perfect for a low-key Sunday.

The None The Wiser golden ale is all the tastier at HeadFlyer Brewing.
Photo by Chris Tarbox

Tarbox Suggests: The citrus-infused None The Wiser; the smoky goodness of the Freckled amber ale

861 E Hennepin Ave.
Minneapolis
www.headflyerbrewing.com

MONDAY

Surly Brewing Co.

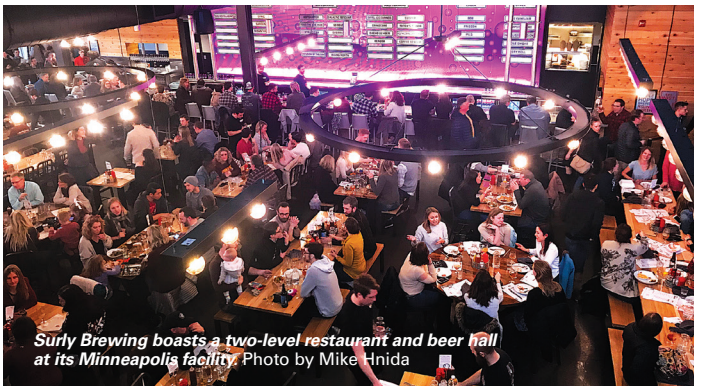
Well, the work week has officially begun. You deserve a drink! And while you're at it, you deserve a damn good meal. That's where Surly comes in. The brewing juggernaut's massive facility, just east of the University of Minnesota's Twin Cities campus, is a triple

Surly features an extensive beer and food menu. Photo by Mike Hnida

threat of a brewery, beer hall, and a family-friendly restaurant, having just added a second-floor pizza parlor to complement its spacious main level beer hall. The energy at Surly is bound to be crackling regardless of when you go, and there's plenty of gratuitously great grub to nosh on during your stay. Try the cornbread, for starters. You won't regret it.

Tarbox Suggests: The champagne-style Frisson lager; the criminally celestial cluster of hops known as Galactic Descent

520 Malcolm Ave. SE
Minneapolis
www.surlybrewing.com



Surly Brewing boasts a two-level restaurant and beer hall at its Minneapolis facility. Photo by Mike Hnida

TUESDAY

BlackStack Brewing

Okay, so you've survived the week thus far. You're doing great.

BlackStack Brewing hosts a special Taco Tuesday event in partnership with Taqueria Los Ocampo. Photo by Mike Hnida

I believe in you. You deserve some tacos. And as luck would have it, the friendly folks at St. Paul's BlackStack Brewing celebrate the third day of the week with Taco Tuesday. It's a nice little bonus, considering that the vast, family-owned, warehouse-style BlackStack is a prime game night location, with loads of tabletop board and card games for you and your pals to spend a few hours playing. And if your hand-eye coordination needs improving, you can play a game of Bags with a beer in hand, or a taco on Tuesdays, courtesy of the talented folks from Taqueria Los Ocampo. And the beer? Top-notch. Don't miss out on this one.

Tarbox Suggests: The infuriatingly delicious and malt-heavy Nettie's Cream Ale; the critically acclaimed, hop-tastic New England IPA Local 755

Nettie's Cream Ale and the Dark Saison are just two of the tasty options from BlackStack Brewing. Photo by Mike Hnida

755 Prior Ave.
St. Paul
www.blackstackbrewing.com

CONTINUED ON PAGE 28

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WEDNESDAY

Modist Brewing Co.

Hump Day is here. The work week is half over, but you still need that extra boost of confidence to galvanize your spirit. The prescription you need is an obvious triumvirate of beer, trivia, and cheese curds. The North Loop-based Modist Brewing Co. has been acclaimed for its experimental style when it comes to making beer, with wonderful oddities such as the Salted Caramel Lager and the Shook Pineapple Milkshake IPA. Right outside of Modist sits The Curious Goat food truck, which—in my humble opinion—offers the BEST cheese curds in the Twin Cities. Fight me. And on top of that, every Wednesday evening, Modist is home to Trivia Against Humanity, an eclectic alternative to the usual trivia outfits that—full disclosure—yours truly co-hosts alongside TAH creator Sam Spadino. Come for the curds and trivia. Stay for the Modist experience.

Tarbox Suggests: The dry and delectable Japanese-style Supra Deluxe Lager; the oh-so-sweet-it-can't-be-beat Shook Pineapple Milkshake IPA.

505 N 3rd St.
Minneapolis
www.modistbrewing.com

The cozy Modist Brewing Co makes its home in the North Loop section of Minneapolis. Photo by Chris Tarbox

THURSDAY

Sisyphus Brewing

First off, any brewery named after a Greek mythological figure is immediately worth checking out. And this brewery in particular, located a hop, skip and a jump from the Walker Art Center and Dunwoody School of Technology, is a definite must if you like your breweries small yet bustling with personality, and if you like a brewery that also doubles as a slick comedy club. Every Thursday, Sisyphus features an open mic amateur hour hosted by Corey Adam, a free event where you can sign up for three minutes of stand-up infamy. And if you're a first-timer, you're guaranteed a spot on the evening's roster, so have those dad puns at the ready! And to amp yourself up, make sure to play some of Sisyphus' pinball machines or grab a bite from the Finer Meats food truck right outside.

Feeling brave Snag a Maris Otter lager and sign up for Amateur Comedy Hour at Sisyphis Brewing every Thursday. Photo by Chris Tarbox

Tarbox Suggests: The oaky surprise of the Maris Otter lager; the Cinnamon Roll Imperial Stout, the dessert beer you never knew you needed

712 Ontario Ave. #100
Minneapolis
www.sisyphusbrewing.com

CONTINUED ON PAGE 30

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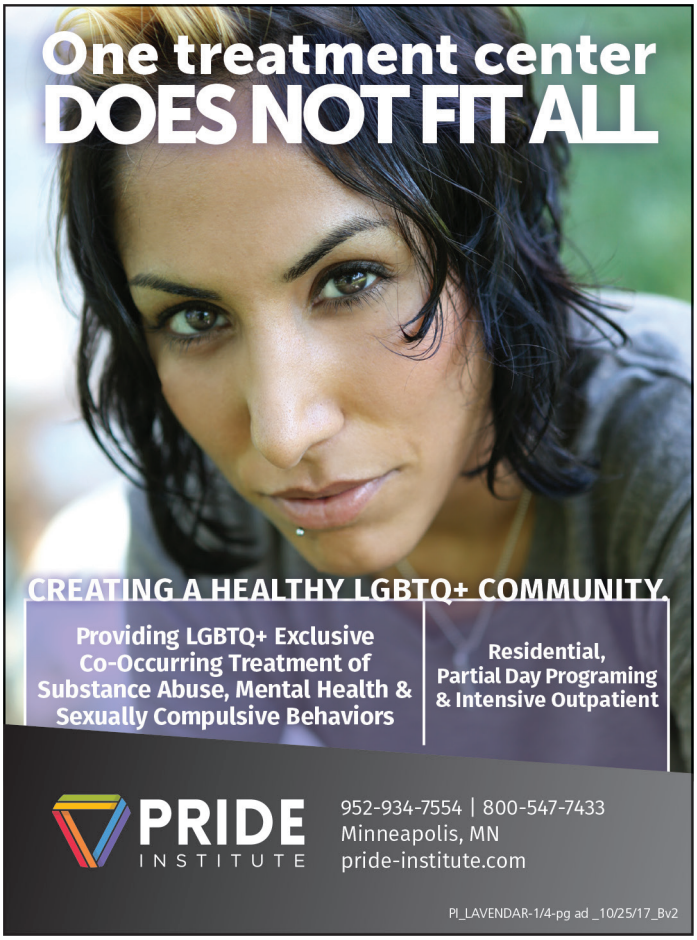
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Sisyphus Brewing is located blocks away from the Walker Art Center and Sculpture Garden. Photo by Chris Tarbox

Urban Growler's restaurant-style set-up makes for a fun, family-friendly experience. Photo by Chris Tarbox

FRIDAY

Urban Growler

You've made it. The work week is DONE. You've earned a much-needed trip to the brewery, and it's tough to think of a better post-work option than the homey, intimate environs of St. Paul's Urban Growler Brewing Company. The first woman-owned microbrewery in Minnesota—not to mention co-owned by real-life couple Deb Loch and Jill Pavlak—Urban Growler boasts an almost deceptive restaurant-style aesthetic, with an excellent selection of food to go with your pint. But that won't obscure the fact that this is a brewery first and foremost, with a fantastic selection of IPAs, cream ales, porters, and seasonal delights. And on Fridays, the brewery offers a Wisconsin fish fry to seal the deal. Urban Growler is an absolute gem for you to start your weekend right.

Tarbox Suggests: The bitter and bold Midwest IPA; the seasonal, Belgian yeast-infused standout White IPA
2325 Endicott St.
St. Paul
www.urbangrowlerbrewing.com

In the mood for an old-fashioned India Pale Ale? Try Urban Growler's Midwest and White IPAs. Photo by Chris Tarbox

SATURDAY

Sociable Cider Werks

Live, from Minneapolis, it's Ciderday Night Live! Your final stop on this weeklong sojourn is that shining apple on the Twin Cities' brewery tree of life, Northeast Minneapolis' inimitable Sociable Cider Werks. I adore cider, and Sociable's gained well-deserved plaudits for its cider-brewing mastery. With a lovely hardwood-and-concrete aesthetic, a giant patio and parking lot

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Edina | Minneapolis | Plymouth

Sociable Cider Werks offers an eclectic selection of cider-based beverages at its Northeast Minneapolis location. Photo by Hamil Griffin-Cassidy

area, and free brewery tours every Saturday, you'll be in apple heaven. Plus, you can supplement that cider with delicious eats courtesy of the Red River food truck, and you can bring your doggos along for the fun! In any event, the casual and super-friendly Sociable is the perfect way to end an adventurous seven days of brew-crawling.

Tarbox Suggests: The tart and tasty dry apple Freewheeler; the floral and aptly named Hop-A-Wheelie

1500 Fillmore St. NE
Minneapolis
www.sociablecider.com ■

The dry apple Freewheeler is one of Sociable's more popular ciders. Photo by Chris Tarbox

LEATHER LIFE | BY STEVE LENIUS | PHOTOS BY STEVE LENIUS

IML Leather Market in Lyrics

This year marks the 40th International Mr. Leather (IML) contest (May 24-28, 2018). For many years, one of the major attractions of the IML weekend has been the Leather Market, which started in 1988 with five vendors. Since then the IML Leather Market has grown, and it now routinely attracts about 100 vendors and thousands of customers shopping for leather, latex, and all manner of fetish supplies.

But as far as I know, the IML Leather Market has never been immortalized in the form of song lyrics. Until now.

The following set of lyrics was inspired by, and is based on, a song called "Come to the Supermarket in Old Peking" by Cole Porter.*

COME TO THE LEATHER MARKET AT IML

Refrain 1:

If you want a leather jock
Or a comfy cock ring for your cock
Or a collar with a Master lock
Or a sling to ring your bell,
Come to the Leather Market at IML.

Or if you want a leather vest
Or a harness that shows off your chest
Or some cowboy wear that's worn out west
Or a pin for your lapel,
Come to the Leather Market at IML.

They have:
ID Lube,
Astro Lube,
Super Lube,
Über Lube,
In a tub, in a tube,
Liquid, cream or gel.

So if you want a caped costume
Or some dungeon fixtures for your room
Or some Locker Room, that sweet perfume
With the scintillating smell,
Come to the Leather Market at IML.

Refrain 2:
If you want some snakebite kits
Or some tasteful tit clamps for your tits
Or some latex wear that really fits
And looks sexy as all hell,
Come to the Leather Market at IML.

Or if you want a length of chain
Or a cane that's simply inhumane
Or a paddle that'll cause some pain
And will make its target yell,
Come to the Leather Market at IML.

They have:
Finger rings,
Nipple rings,
Navel rings,
Nasal rings,
Floggers with both thuds and stings
That feel absolutely swell.

So if you want a kilt that's bold
Or a dildo that's remote-controlled
Or a cozy corset trimmed in gold
That will truly cast a spell,
Come to the Leather Market—
You'll find lots of things you won't find at Target—
So come to the Leather Market at IML.

FOOTNOTE:

*"Come to the Supermarket in Old Peking" was written in 1958 by Cole Porter, and was one of the last songs he wrote. Barbra Streisand included the song on her debut album in 1963. ■

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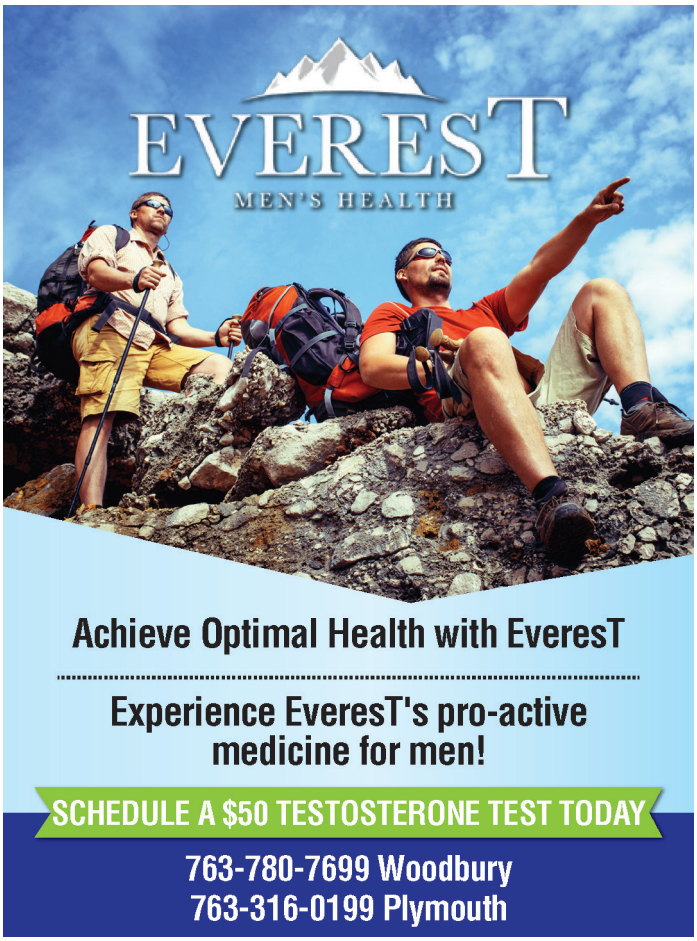
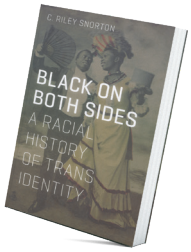


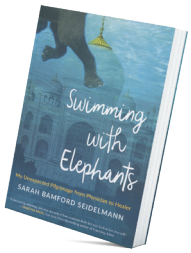
BOOKS | BY E.B. BOATNER



Black on Both Sides: A Racial History of Trans Identity

C. Riley Snorton
UMN Press
$24.95

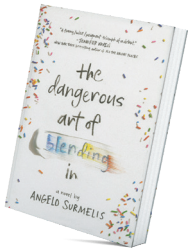
Snorton's divisions of Black on Both Sides, "Blacken," "Transit," and "Blackout," should alert the reader that this book is not simply a history of black transgender individuals. The word "imbrication" appears numerous times throughout the text, and its literal meaning (a layering of scales on a surface) together with the visual images it evokes—layering, change, and fluidity—reveal the author's methodology. For aside from the white Christine Jorgensen and murdered Brandon Teena, "transsexual" is not the focus. Trans here associates with transition, change; transitivity, as Snorton explains. Black people cross-dressing to escape capture are not necessarily transgender, but still, "Black gender is open to…manipulation and rearrangement." Snorton historically explores genderless flesh, negation of blackness, and "shifting notions of human valuation." A challenging read.



Swimming with Elephants: My Unexpected Pilgrimage from Physician to Healer

Sarah Bamford Seidelmann
Conari Press
$18.95

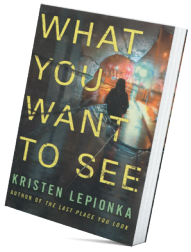
What, one asks, moved Seidelmann—wife, mother of four, a 20-year career in medicine—to move on, move out, into and around the world to become again a healer? "I was gently eased into chaos by a sneaking sensation that I was no longer doing the work I was meant to do." As simple and as complex as that. She learned to journey—the inner, shamanic travel between the worlds—then packed her bags for passport-bearing, intercontinental travel. To South Africa and India, with its sacred Ganges. Over time, she acquired a (spirit) Asian elephant named Alice, and through many days and nights of anguish and worry about her spouse, her children, she learned. Seidelmann now opens her heart to share that knowledge with you.



The Dangerous Art of Blending In

Angelo Surmelis
Balzer and Bray
$17.99

Surmelis' debut novel, based on his own life, is harrowing beyond the usual expectation for a YA novel. As the story opens, 17-year-old Evan Panos returns from school to find their Greek pastor intoning to a group, "We cast the devil's stronghold from his body. We pray to God for His mercy on his dark soul." "His," meaning Evan's. A typical day. Evan's immigrant Greek mother has physically and verbally abused him for over a decade; his father never intervenes. Evan's artistic, does well in school, and has recently realized his attraction to his friend Henry. The plot grips, but the most valuable lesson for the outsider is just why it so difficult—sometimes impossible—for the abused to share, to seek help, to trust.



What You Want to See

Kristen Lepionka
Minotaur
$25.99

P.I. Roxane Weary is back again, hired by a client who thinks his fiancée, Marin, is having an affair, to follow Marin, but who becomes prime suspect when Marin is shot to death. Roxane investigates further, discovering Marin's two previous marriages, a son recently released from prison, and a criminal record. Still reeling from her cop father's murder and her thorny relationship with her mother and two brothers, Roxane next uncovers a gang of con artists defrauding elderly home owners and the death of an elderly woman near Marin's death site—then her own mother's entrapment in the web. Lepionka is a master of complex plots that point in one direction, then explode in unforeseen endings. Do read debut novel, The Last Place You Look. ■

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RIDE REVIEW | BY RANDY STERN | PHOTOS BY RANDY STERN

2018 Mitsubishi Outlander Sport

One of our favorite vehicles is still going strong.

It first appeared here as a 2011 model. Since then, we had plenty of them to go around. It has evolved since with new front ends, trim, a choice of two engines, a solid all-wheel drive system, and comfort for four to five people.

This vehicle is so popular, it is the best-selling vehicle in its class for half of the Twin Cities market. You can see them everywhere in the Twin Cities and parts of this state!

We are talking about the Mitsubishi Outlander Sport.

For 2018, Mitsubishi made further changes to one of its most popular vehicles. It also simplified the lineup to four trim levels, two engines, and a choice of front-wheel drive or All-Wheel Control. Our 2018 Outlander Sport tester was the SEL 2.4 with All-Wheel Control—the top-of-the-line.

Now on our third Outlander Sport, we now ask one simple question: Does it still hold up as one of our favorite vehicles?

New for 2018 is a new front end that features a horizontal chrome strip accenting the upper grille and an all-new lower grille and bumper. A new set of LED running lamps run on an angle apart from the fog light area on the lower bumper. Though it sits with the smallest SUVs in the market, this update creates more distinction for this popular model. The rear end receives a chrome strip above the license plate area on the liftgate. The rear bumper is new, with a diffuser area wrapped in black plastic for protection.

Everything else remains the same. Still, the doors open big for easy access and exit. Ground clearance is at 8.5 inches, high enough to clear many obstacles that would stop mere automobiles. Still, the Outlander Sport is a distinctive small SUV to stand out in a crowd. In the Twin Cities alone, you could be in a crowd of Outlander Sports—which is really a good thing if you consider how popular this vehicle has been in our area and in the community.

Over the years, Mitsubishi has worked on adding more value inside of the Outlander Sport. For 2018, the infotainment screen was improved for better operation, easier to use icons in and around the screen, and the additional connectivity of Apple CarPlay and Android Auto. In recent years, we have seen improved controls and switches all around, plus some additional features—including two USB ports that are easy to spot in the lower console, the switches for the Lane Departure Warning and Forward Collision Mitigation in the lower left part of the instrument panel. The automatic headlamps are switched on at the end of the turn signal stalk.

The rest of the Outlander Sport's interior remains the same, familiar and quite good. You just have to sit down in those big seats up front. A bit more bolstering in the seatback might help to keep us locked in a bit more. Room for five is possible. Rear seat comfort is very good overall. This tester came with a panoramic roof with LED lighting accents. Though one would want a sliding part to open up, there is an uninterrupted pane of glass to see what's above for the passengers' enjoyment.

Cargo space is generous, starting at 21.7 cubic feet with all seats up, expanding to 49.5 cubic feet all the way to the front seats. In all, it is a tall and wide space to load up for the journey. One thing to keep in mind when loading up the rear: watch out for the Rockford Fosgate subwoofer, if equipped.

The infotainment system came with Bluetooth connectivity for Apple CarPlay and Android Auto. Nine Rockford Fosgate speakers take care of the rest, emitting 710 watts of clean sound around the cabin.

Though you can get a 2.0-liter engine for the ES and LE models, the better choice is the 2.4-liter four-cylinder MIVEC engine. With 168 horsepower and 167 pound-feet of torque, this is the engine you need for every situation, such as snow, ice, and heading down a gravel road. Mit-

subishi connected this engine to the Continuously Variable Transmission and offers this in both front-wheel drive and All-Wheel Control on our tester. In terms of fuel economy, we averaged 25.7 MPG.

When driving the Outlander Sport, you will appreciate how well it goes about its business. There had been improvements on ride quality thanks to an approach toward a balanced ride that absorbs bumps and potholes extremely well, even with an 8.7-inch ground clearance. That ground clearance also yields softer corners with some lean and roll through the turns. The steering wheel is perfectly weighted for better control and on-center feel, yet it adequately provides enough effort in turning. It has a tight turning radius, which makes getting out of tight situations easier. Brakes are very good with good power on normal and panic stops.

The main reason why many of us bought Outlander Sports was that of its overall value. The base price for an ES 2.0 model with front-wheel drive and a manual transmission is $20,395. Our SEL 2.4 with AWC came with a sticker price of $29,110.

To talk about the Mitsubishi Outlander Sport again is to bring up two developments that have challenged our favorite subcompact SUV. For one, it has a lot of competition these days. This year alone saw the introduction of the Ford Ecosport, with the Nissan Kicks coming soon to replace the Juke. Every mainstream manufacturer now has a challenger against our favorite vehicle in this segment.

However, a visit to a Mitsubishi dealer will also yield some company alongside the Outlander Sport. The larger, coupe-like Eclipse Cross has just arrived to compete in the high-stakes battle for the highly popular compact SUV segment. Does that mean that our favorite small SUV will shove aside for its newborn angular sister? Mitsubishi would like us to embrace the new SUV, as long as we pay $2,900 more for one above the Outlander Sport.

But for those of us who want an honest value in a subcompact SUV and would prefer something that can do the job well and keep us happy, then your choice is simply the Mitsubishi Outlander Sport. ■

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DATELAND | BY JENNIFER PARELLO

Women I Don't Like, Vol. 2

I'm Facebook friends with my archenemy.

Several years ago, when I learned she was leaving the company we worked for, I broke out in a jig in my office. And I don't even know how to jig! My body took it upon itself to react in a spontaneously combustive jig!

Yet, a few months ago when my archenemy sent me a "friend" request, I accepted it immediately.

I'm sure her therapist is as stumped as mine is over our ersatz camaraderie.

When we worked together, I would cringe each time I saw her stupid face or heard her stupid name: Agathe. She's got some nerve having that name! She's not even French! She grew up in Iowa! But that never stopped her from wearing a beret or pompously insisting that people pronounce her name as "A-gat." I, of course, always introduced her in meetings as "Aga-tha," because I'm petty and vengeful. And because I'm a patriot and that's how we pronounce that name in America!

Agathe and I had quietly loathed each other for years. We started our careers in publishing around the same time. She successfully rode each swell that roiled our troubled industry through the power of fawning, wheedling, and bootlicking. She would threaten to quit every six months, only to be wooed back—and promoted—by insecure executives who fed off her masterful toadying. Most repulsively, she routinely sacrificed the small needs of her staff in order to benefit herself.

I, on the other hand, rose to the middle of the organization through a combination of hard work and being a pain in the ass: but all in the name of defending the proletariat against our corporate overlords.

I once organized a break-in to our HR director's office so we could get a peek at our personnel files. In my file, I found dozens of pink memos written in the HR director's crabbed hand. Her handwriting was nearly indecipherable, so I could decode only two words in her description of me: "demagogue" and "ardent." I approved of both terms and, frankly, was impressed that she knew how to spell "demagogue."

Agathe and I maintained a healthy distance at the office. If she were forced to interact with me, she'd stand just outside my doorway, inveigling me in a high-pitched whine generally associated with birds of prey. She'd perch at the lip of my office and knock tentatively at my open door. Her faux timidity was one of the things I most disliked about her. She was, in reality, as aggressive and ruthless as a honey badger, though without its roguish charm.

"Hi?" she'd say. This is how she'd start every conversation with me. I had long wanted to rip the question mark off the greeting and slap her silly with it.

For as much as we hated each other, we managed to treat each other with strained professionalism. We rarely came at each other head-on. Rather, we each were masters of the flank attack. She may have been an inept, lazy, pompous self-promoter, but I always respected her as a worthy opponent.

Once we became Facebook friends, though, I was baffled to discover that my hatred for her began to mellow. And that made me sad. Having her as my enemy gave me a raison d'etre. I suppose Superman would regret losing Lex Luthor, too. Maybe that's why Superman never kills Luthor.

For all the talk of how social media is destroying civility, little has been said of its power to strip relationships of a healthy fervor. How can you maintain a strong enmity or love for someone when faced with the banality of their daily life? Now when I see her on my feed, the most passion I can muster is an eye roll.

Thanks to Facebook, I'm reminded daily that I only mildly dislike Agathe. I miss hating her. I need a new archenemy. ■

SKIRTING THE ISSUES | BY ELLEN KRUG

Two Humans

In the last couple weeks, I've had two conversations that have impacted me greatly. In each instance, the person I spoke with was a black man.

One conversation followed a talk I gave at a law firm in Kansas City. That talk—"#MeToo: A Transwoman's Perspective"—centers on what it's been like living as female compared to when I presented as a man. (I transitioned genders in 2009 at age 52.)

Part of my Kansas City talk focused on how women need to look out for other women. I spoke of how we must avoid classism and how it's obligatory to reach out to low-income areas and communities of color to help women and girls obtain better footing for success. It was, in part, a strident call to action which clearly had the potential to make the power people in the room (read: men) uncomfortable by reminding how they marginalize women and those who lack voices in our society.

As I gave that talk to mainly white people, a larger (what I'd call "teddy bear-sized") bald fortyish black man in the front row smiled and nodded at many of my words. I sensed I was encroaching on various invisible lines in the room—after all, law firms are not usually bastions of progressivism—and the man's friendly affirmation helped me remain confident in my approach.

Later, the man and I spoke. He and several other board members for the local GLBT Chamber of Commerce had been invited to the law firm for a meeting on various matters including my talk. I joked with this man about how he had a wonderful smile and how seeing it ever-present during my talk helped give me the confidence to say what I thought was necessary. I even asked if I could hug him because I was so appreciative.

One of the things this man said in response was, "Ellie, because you're white, you can get away with saying what you did about helping women of color. I could never say that; people would react far too negatively if the words came from me or another person of color."

While I intuitively understood this about our society, hearing a black man say it so further enlightened me that I'll never forget the conversation. Or the sadness that this reality brought to my heart—why do we allow the color of one's skin to dictate the validity of their words?

The second conversation of significance involved my interview of a black Twin Cities community leader who has done much to heal racial divisions and push forward communities of color. During our conversation, I had the opportunity to learn much about him and he got to know me and hear about my work as a speaker on diversity and inclusion, particularly the latter.

As I wrapped up my interview and thanked the man for giving me his time, he said, "And thank you for what you do, Ellie. You don't simply champion your group, but instead you champion everyone. That's pretty unusual."

I was really humbled by those words since this person had achieved far more societal change than I ever could imagine accomplishing.

And once again, reality sank in. It is true that I do champion ALL HUMANS with my work—I don't see it being enough to simply speak up on behalf of transgender folks alone (although for sure I work to protect my community). No one has a monopoly on surviving oppression, and for sure, we all have so many more commonalities than differences. When we allow our specific identities—our "tribes"—to become the reason to seek respect, we blind ourselves to the need for recognizing that all humans—regardless of skin color, GLBT status, religion, veteran status and the host of other things we use to group humans—deserve basic respect and fulfillment of core needs like housing, health care and employment.

As Amy Chua writes in her new book, *Political Tribes*, "(W)hat is needed is one-on-one human engagement, which is hard precisely because of how divided we are. But anything worth achieving is difficult. When people from different tribes see one another as human beings who at the end of the day want the same things—kindness, dignity, security for loved ones—hearts can change."

Your takeaway here—if you're so inclined—is that we all need to have each other's back, something that we can't even begin to do if we continue to group and label humans around their various identities. Having the conversations with these two humans—forget about the identity "black men"—is proof that when we allow ourselves the time and opportunity to talk one-to-one with each other, we can learn (or relearn) critical things.

Reach out to another human who is different than you. Our collective existence depends on it. ■

Ellen (Ellie) Krug is the author of Getting to Ellen: A Memoir about Love, Honesty and Gender Change *(2013). She speaks and trains on diversity and inclusion topics; visit www.elliekrug.com where you can also sign up for her newsletter, The Ripple. She welcomes your comments at ellenkrugwriter@gmail.com.*

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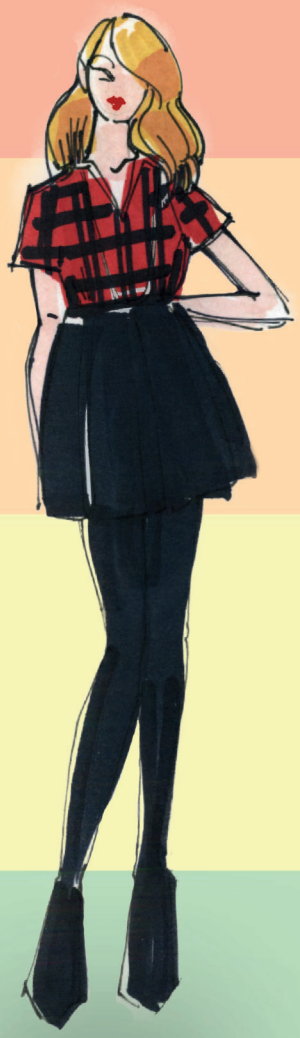

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